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DER BERGMANN VON FAHLUN.

Die Bearbeitungen der Geschichte von dem Bergmann von Fahlun. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde von GEORG FRIEDMANN. Berlin, 1887.

The above dissertation will be of value to all who are interested in the development of actual occurrences into legends and finally into poetic forms. The work of the author is neatly done and exceptionally attractive in its method of treatment and pleasant style. It is not his fault that his subject is an humble one and did not terminate in a HAMERLING'S "Ahasver in Rom," SCHILLER'S "Tell," or GOETHE'S "Faust."

The author begins with the first report of the "Miner of Fahlun", which appeared in a Copenhagen periodical, July 20, 1720, and is in short as follows: In a shaft of the mines at Fahlun, Sweden, which had been deserted for forty years, was discovered upon reopening the works a man whose clothes had rotted away but whose body was well preserved (probably from the effects of green copperas). The medical faculty desired the cadaver, but it was demanded by an old woman who claimed to be the bride of the deceased and who only relinquished her claims upon the receipt of a sufficient sum of money.—Surely there seems to be little room for poetry here, but the author of our thesis follows this report and others through different periods of prose development, until poetic features gradually appear and the imaginations of minor and, at last, of greater poets—among others FRIEDRICH RÜCKERT and ÖHLENSCHLÄGER—are aroused to poetic reproduction.

The little story, so simple at the start, now appears in the more pretentious form of ballads, romantic tales, and finally of drama and opera, and passes from land to land—from tongue to tongue. The history of the development, except in the case of ÖHLENSCHLÄGER'S relation to the legend, is so clear that we can see it all grow up before us.

There are interesting lessons to be drawn from this carefully detailed history that confirm similar growths elsewhere in literature. In such development the legend can move along monotonously for a long time, and then

suddenly make a very marked change that transforms all, with yet enough of the old remaining to preserve the historical continuity. I imagine that most students of "Faust" were surprised, upon first reading GOETHE'S 'Faust in ursprünglicher Gestalt' (edited by ERICH SCHMIDT, Weimar, 1887), to notice that Faust in Auerbach's *Keller* plays the rôle that Mephisto has since assumed. What a change! This turn transforms the old Faust-legend, which now becomes too often only a burden to the poet rather than a help, and the new conception henceforth struggles with the old for the mastery. Many almost contradictory features of the great poem can be readily explained by a glance at the old legend, and by reflecting on the new conception that the poet brings into the work.

In the dissertation before us, the growth of the story of the Swedish miner of Fahlun is very clearly traced in its limited sphere of influence upon European literature. We should like to see the same clear treatment of one of the more important legends.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

OTIS'S 'ELEMENTARY GERMAN.'

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Permit me to correct one or two slight oversights in your March notice (col. 183) of Prof. OTIS'S chapter on pronunciation in his 'Elementary German'. The pronunciation of initial *ch* is indicated on p. 7, l. 4 of the aforesaid work. In *gehabt*, *b* is of course final, while *b* in *behäbig* is in both cases initial, as appears from the explanation of those terms in the preceding paragraph, p. 5, § 12. (Cf. § 31, and SANDER'S 'Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache', ii, 59 iii, on *Inlaut*.)

As to the pronunciation of final *g*, Prof. OTIS stated his own view. His editor did not care to amplify that statement on a point where usage varies among Germans themselves. Each teacher will naturally utilize his own experience or training.

The mid-mixed vowel *e* is found, to be sure, in prefixes (although numerous exceptions